THE

RAGGED SCHOOL UNION Magazine.

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Original Papers.

THE ARAB OF THE CITY,

BEING THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A LONDON THIEF.

CHAPTER II.

VAGABOND LIFE.

It is a perilous thing for youth to stumble on the threshold of its being. The opening scenes of life reveal an eventful crisis in its career, that may decide its final destiny; and one heedless, unhappy step at commencement, may spoil the whole course of subsequent experience, and insure irrecoverable ruin. If, by thoughtless folly, or the force of temptation, the young spirit be betrayed into crime, the virgin peace of that nature is violated, and its conscious virtue is dishonoured. And who shall then replace in that soul, now robbed and spoiled, its once cloudless and unaccusing conscience? Conscious shame refuses to encounter the offended looks of friends, whom its sin has estranged; and wounded guilt, gathering hardihood from hopelessness, abandons itself to the ready companionship of crime, and rushes headlong on ruin.

With the youth, whose experience these pages disclose, the die was cast. He stood desolate and alone—a detected and degraded thief. A conspiracy of evil causes had led him into this awful position, and it is easy to detect in his history the sources of his sin, which may serve to warn other thoughtless youths from the same snares and overthrow. Foremost among the occasions of his fall, you may mark a mixture of childish folly and precocious depravity. There is boyhood's wild passion for roaming and adventure, along with reckless disregard of religious principle or personal honour. The company of unprincipled youths is combined with culpable facilities for purloining his uncle's money, to whet the appetite for indulging expensive and ungodly amusements. The pride of heart, which refused to return

to the parental roof, and the concert and system which marked the adept in the plan and accomplishment of the first crimes, all bespoke the criminal lack of early religious training, and the absence of Christian correction and kindly control, that might have preserved or rescued the young transgressor from his fatal lapse.

But now that our youth had overleaped the restraints of law, and proclaimed himself a fugitive from human affection, he stood at bay before a world, whose scowl seemed to fall from every countenance upon the uneasy conscience within him, to madden him to desperation. Whither was this disjointed atom of human society, cast loose at first upon the vast ocean of life, to drift? Alas! corrupt inclination, the current of evil opportunity, and the absence of kindly Christian succour—all concur to sweep that young spirit in one fatal direction. We leave him to tell his own sad tale.—

I then resolved to go into the country; therefore I sold the clothes I had on, and put on my working clothes, which I had left at a shop till I called for them. The same night I slept at a public-house at Brixton Hill. At this time I was not aware of the existence of lodging-houses. The next day I went through Croydon, and picked up a companion that had travelled nearly one hundred and twenty miles, and from him I learned many "dodges" in travelling; but I could not agree with him, so after sleeping with him at his aunt's, at Crawley, in Sussex, the next day we parted. He was going to Brighton, but I wished to return to London. My money was nearly gone, and in two days after, when I came into town, I had but sixpence left. This I spent at the Surrey Theatre. I had now no money, no lodgings, and not knowing what to do, after walking about till nearly three o'clock in the morning, at last I spoke to a policeman on London Bridge, and related to him my distress. He advised me to apply to the Refuge for the Destitute in Playhouse Yard, which I did, and after being questioned as to my home, etc., I was admitted; a piece of bread they gave me was the only food I had tasted for eighteen hours, though I could spend sixpence to go to the play. I may say that this night was the occasion of the misery and the degrading life that I led for years after; here in this place were assembled upwards of six hundred persons, the greater part of them of the most vicious class of society. Here were men that had for years led a vagrant's life, that knew every union and workhouse in England and Wales, and every place where relief was given. Then here were youths that had run away from their apprenticeships, run away from their ships, and from their homes—all were mixed and intermingled with one another; here was instruction given to those who were as yet not tainted with vagrantism, by those who were well versed in those things; here they asked questions how to get into this union, or that workhouse—what to say, what time to go, etc.: this is the way that the time is spent, from the admittance of the man or youth till the "turn out" in the morning, when each was supplied with necessary food.*

* This Refuge is "supported by voluntary contributions," and is open at night only for vagrants.

It was on a Saturday when I first applied, and a ticket was given to me, which would admit me for ten days, but my mind was bent on roving into the country. Accordingly, on the following Monday morning I started off to Liverpool. I had been taught and "schooled," and learned more in the two nights while I was in the Refuge, than I could have learned at any other place of the kind in a twelvemonth. Well, I started off, and after a few miles' walk, I overtook two sailors that were going to Liverpool. I carried their bundles for them, and they gave me victuals and drink; but on arriving at St. Alban's, they told me to go to the union, which I did. I had to go to the overseer for an order, which I took to the union; this was the first union I had ever lodged or had relief at. Here I met with others, who I found out were old hands, and with one of them I agreed to travel, to go from union to union, till we should take a tour of England. I travelled from town to town and union to union, till I was a confirmed vagabond. I was now nearly in rags, the shoes I wore I had to beg, and often would my thoughts lead me to my home. Oh! what would I have given, if I had had it, to be once again reconciled to my friends. I then knew that I had done that by which I had forfeited all claim of compassion from my friends. I thought I was the greatest vagabond extant; then I thought of the other extreme—"What is the use of repining—could I not thieve?" Yes; but I wanted the "pluck," (courage;) I had no "plucky pal," (bold comrade;) but yet I could not forego temptations, though what I did was petty thieving. I continued this mode of living for several months. I had my butcher's dress, and I would frequently call on the butchers in the towns and ask for employment from them, which if they could have given me I was not able to do, for I had not been long enough at the trade, as I was not competent to kill and dress a sheep. So I used to call upon them of an evening, when I could get as much money and meat as would keep me for the coming day; thus I contrived to live by scheming.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY COMPUNCTIONS—A VISION OF HOME.

I HAD now been away from home more than eighteen months. I resolved on writing to my parents, which I did from Hungerford, in Berkshire. I told them I was sorry for what I did, but I left them in doubt as to my present mode of existence. They answered my letter, and with what joy did I receive it. They promised if I would return home, that nothing ever would be said to me about what I had done; they begged me to return home—all would be forgiven me. But, no—my heart was hardened. I was glad to hear they were well, that they had forgiven me—but I was a "thief;" this always haunted me, and I seemed as if every person could tell I was a vagabond and thief. I now was in London—I then took a tour into Kent. I remember on one occasion, in going there, I had to pass a few miles on the road which led to R———, my home; it was getting dusk, and

presently a carriage came in sight; it neared me, and to my great surprise it was my father who was driving it. I could almost have spoken—but it passed by; in about an hour's time it returned, and passed by me again, but it was quite dark then. Another hour brought me opposite the door of my native home; the window blind was down, and I could distinctly see the forms of my father, mother, and brother, sitting down to their evening meal. I stood still for some minutes, and gazed intently on their shadows. The tears came into my eyes—I wished I had resolution enough to have knocked at the door then; they would have been so happy then—no angry words or questions would have passed. But there I stood, hungry, cold, pennyless, houseless: who was the "coward" then? who was afraid then? I had not been afraid to do wrong, but I was afraid to do right; one bold effort then, and the years of infamy since I might not have known. I went away with a heavy heart to the town, distant one mile. I had no money, so I went to the overseer, who resided more than a mile out of the town; he gave me my lodging money, and I slept in the town, where I was so well-known twenty months before. Afterwards I went round Kent, and enlisted several times; but after receiving the money, I would decamp early in the morning. On one occasion I enlisted at Lewes; I passed the doctor, and after a short time arrived at London, when I was rejected by the general doctor. They gave me a discharge, and 5*s*. I went as usual to the theatres as often as I had the means, for they were my chief delight. I have often spent my last sixpence in going to them, and after coming out, I have had to walk about the remaining part of the night.

It is impossible to peruse these simple reminiscences of erring experience without intensely painful emotion. They teach us—what the reputable of mankind are apt to forget—that the so-called vicious and virtuous in society are separated by a narrower distinction of character than the world supposes; and that—while there is but a step between temptation and disgrace—the outcast and abandoned may often be found to hover on the path of penitence and reformation, if they could only see an opening, or receive an encouragement to return. The vision of the virtuous cottage-home, with its internal brightness and comfort, and its lost wanderer lingering tearfully amidst the lone darkness beside its threshold, reveals but a miniature picture of human life in the world at large—where happy hearts within are closely related to the broken-hearted wanderers without, although the link of kindly communion is broken between them—where humble comfort crowns the board of virtuous industry, while vice shivers in unsheltered cold and hunger and nakedness without—where virtuous love is weeping for its lost prodigal, and yearns for his return; while the guilty wanderer himself, as he skulks under the dark shadow of his own crimes, is haunted by heavenly images of early love, which beckon him back to obedience, if his guilty pride would only allow him.

Who, in a world of such intimate relationship with sin, can fail

to magnify the religion of the Bible, which, while it includes all men in one brotherhood of guilt before God, breathes over all the benignity of a Divine Saviour, and invites the vilest outcast to learn in the favour of God, the blessedness of a renewed nature and a holy life? The institutions of mercy for the recovery of the abandoned, which have been created in our land under the kindly genius of Christianity, are but so many sanctuaries in which homeless guilt may find a welcome, and be melted by holy kindness into a better nature. What are our Ragged Schools but a faint substitute for the blessings of home, to those who have never known the name, or have been driven from them as dens of misery? and while there are homeless and depraved hearts that prowl in the darkness around our thresholds, still let these sacred institutions diffuse their light and gladness, to arrest the wayward wanderer—to form nurseries of devotion and virtue for natures inured hitherto only to crime—and to live in the gratitude of broken hearts whom they have healed, as the birthplace of their better existence, and the chosen home of their ransomed souls.

(To be continued.)

THE IMPULSE OF EMIGRATION NEEDED TO CARRY ON THE RAGGED SCHOOL MOVEMENT.

The Ragged Industrial School movement has revealed many of the dark features of juvenile destitution. Out of its upheavings Lord Ashley and Dr. Guthrie have drawn those vivid and glowing pictures, which have thrilled the world with wonder and dismay. It was no slight thing to be told, that thousands and tens of thousands of outcast and lawless children are roving the country, living by plunder, and laughing to scorn the threat of the magistrate, and the utmost severity of punishment that the laws can inflict. What was to be done with them, was a question more easily asked than answered. Prison discipline did not improve—indeed, the general opinion seemed to be, that it rendered them worse. Transportation had lost its terror, and before its influence was tried, they had become so bad that the colonies, thirsting for inhabitants, absolutely rejected them. But it has been demonstrated, that they were wicked and worthless not from choice, but necessity; for no sooner had a suitable asylum been opened, than these scorned and neglected little ones gladly availed themselves of its shelter. To whip or imprison a starving child, for having stolen a piece of bread to satisfy his hunger, is both a folly and a sin. It is a folly, because it only hardens him in iniquity; and it is a sin, because it is contrary to the law of God: and the consequences of the vice and the folly have been visited on our own heads, for we are now smarting under burdensome poor law, prison, and police assessments, which every year become heavier and harder to bear, and the numbers of criminals are constantly increasing. We think that the only effectual remedy for the evils we have noticed is the Industrial School, supplemented by a regular and efficient system of voluntary Emigration. When the Schools of Industry were established in Aberdeen, the first inmates, weakened and debased by self-support and street patronage, were found stunted in growth and uncultivated in intellect; not more than ten per cent. knew the letters in the alphabet; many did not know their Christian name; and it was a considerable time before the teachers felt satisfied that their common

language was understood. In most of them the body was thin and emaciated, and the head remarkably small. After an accurate and extensive comparative measurement it was found, that the average size of the heads of all the children at any given age, was only equal to the average size of the heads of middle class children three years younger. Thus, the average size of the heads of Industrial School children at eleven years, was only equal to the average size of the head of a child of the middle classes at seven, and their whole physical and mental development seemed to be in the same proportion. These children at fourteen years of age were, therefore, physically unfit for the labour-market, and in the contest for employment they were unable to come into fair competition with the better cared for children of the working classes. But in these schools there is now no perceptible inferiority, and a well-trained, well-educated child of the Industrial School would, at fourteen years of age, be reckoned at par in the labour-market. Still, however well qualified, a difficulty often arises at this point of his progress—for, should he get into employment, he is liable to ill-health, which for a time disables him for work; and during this period, having no resources to fall back upon, no parent able to protect him, and no suitable home to shelter him, he is either altogether lost, or, when he re-appears—weakened and ragged from sickness and neglect—his master looks cold upon him, and probably declines his service, and the poor depressed youth is driven by hunger and wretchedness into immorality and crime. Thus, it becomes needful to supplement the Industrial School by a liberal scheme of Emigration, which, at the same time, slackens the supply of the home labour-market, answers the crying demand of the colonies, and permanently benefits the intending emigrant. But, it has been said, that this is an improper boon to the pauper child at the expense of the child of the independent operative. This is a mistake. In every place there is a certain demand for the labour of the young, liable of course to considerable fluctuation, but in this country it is felt that the labour-market is generally overstocked. The demand is not equal to the supply, and anything which brings the supply and demand into a healthy equality must be of advantage to those seeking employment. Suppose a dozen children waiting on Monday morning outside the factory door asking for employment, where only half a dozen can be taken in—we may imagine the sort of scramble that will be occasioned. The stout, well-grown, will keep the feeble and stunted in the rear, and were it not for them, would be in a position to demand a fair rate of wages; but the small fry, though unfit for hard work, are willing to take employment at the lowest possible remuneration; and though the former are ultimately preferred, yet the latter, though consigned to starvation by the preference, materially influence the wages. Every one knows the intimate connection between supply and demand, and the effects which are always produced by any disparity between them. Now, although the well-conditioned children have been admitted, the low biddings of the other have considerably affected the amount of their remuneration, and they would have reckoned it a lucky occurrence if their opponents had, by any chance, been withdrawn. Now, Emigration would effect this, and benefit at the same time all the candidates for employment, and those that remain would not grudge the small sum that might be required to get the others permanently out of the way. But, if these worthless, untrained, weakly children, disadvantageously overstocked the labour-market, and opposed the interests of the children of the well-conditioned operative, much more unfavourably do they affect their interests when they appear as the well-trained, well-disciplined pupils from the Industrial School. Formerly, their presence tended merely to depress the market—now, they carry the higher prizes in the race for employment; and the work-

ing man, who has contributed to the support of the Industrial School, sees its children contesting successfully with his own, and often first reaching the goal. If he earnestly wished the original ragged out of the way, he is now much more anxious to be freed from the competition which he has himself contributed to raise, and would gladly concur in any scheme by which the general good would be promoted, and his individual and family interests unaffected. No class of the community can grudge the boon of Emigration to the outcast and the destitute; but, till nurtured and trained in the Industrial School, the "original ragged," as a class, are physically unfit for Emigration, and it is no wonder that the colonies reject the sweepings of our streets and the purging of our jails. "The public's step-son," James Macnamara,* who is now an inmate of the General Prison at Perth for the second time, is about twelve years of age, and has been under prison training since he was eight, still feels his inability for an emigrant's life, for though he has been urged to go abroad, on the promise that six months of the eighteen would possibly be struck from the term of his imprisonment, and himself provided with every necessary, yet he steadily refuses, preferring the safe keeping and protection of his step-fathers to the doubtful independence of a distant settlement. We have little doubt, that the first use he will make of liberty, will again bring him before a criminal court, and a sentence of transportation, so long delayed, will at last be pronounced, compelling him to leave a country endeared to him only by prison recollections! It is understood that well-grown, well-trained children of twelve years of age, would be acceptable in many of the colonies, and that they could be conveyed to the most distant at an expense of about ten pounds each,† one half of which would be defrayed by the colony. Now, as children are not allowed to be received into many branches of employment in this country till they are thirteen years of age, and if paupers must be maintained at the public expense till that time, it is clear that a saving would be effected by sending them abroad at twelve, instead of keeping them at home, earning little or nothing, as is frequently the case, till fourteen.

In every view, therefore—social, civil, religious, and economical—Industrial Schools, supplemented by Emigration, are deserving of public support.

SCENES AND SIGHTS IN LONDON.

No. IV.

THE MISERIES AND DEMORALIZING INFLUENCES OF LODGING-HOUSES.‡

MUCH has of late been written upon the subject of improving the dwellings of the poor, and strange but truthful contrasts have been made between the "cellar" and the "model lodging-house." That one-half the world don't know how the other half lives still holds good, and is equally applicable to the common lodging-houses of London.

But very few persons, indeed, are acquainted with the squalor, wretchedness, vice, and immorality of these odious dwellings. They are the

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* See No. 7 of this Magazine.

† The passage to Australia is from £15 to £20, exclusive of outfit.—ED.

‡ We are furnished with this important paper by Mr. H. R. Williams, the indefatigable Secretary of the Ragged Industrial School and Juvenile Refuge, King Edward Street, Mile End; whose unceasing labours on behalf of the outcasts, whose wretched condition he describes, are worthy of imitation.

receptacles of depravity, prostitution, and theft. The most daring thief, as well as the least proficient in juvenile delinquency, finds his way to these dens of infamy, where every species of crime is known and practised. The youth, however uninitiated when he enters for the first time, is speedily made an adept in one or other of the "professions:" the first night's lesson is a most important one; everything is placed before him in a new light—the hair-breadth escapes, the splendid booty, their immunity from labour, the luxury and ease consequent upon the successful depredation, the "glory" attendant upon their wild and lawless exploits, together with the history of some one or more of the most "renowned," form the programme of the intellectual training for the evening; coupled with this is the noisy mirth, the drinking and feasting of the most successful. A sharp expert lad is of the utmost importance to those engaged in the profession of "pocket-lifting." "Ladies' patents," as their pockets are now called, are generally eased of their contents by very young boys, attended by their "lurchers." One of the former frankly confessed to me one day, that "he didn't pick gentlemen's pockets, only ladies;" then he never took anything but money; the purses he never kept; the handkerchiefs were of no value, so he always left them. Connected as I am with a large Ragged School in the east of London, peculiar facilities are afforded me of obtaining information relative to the condition, the habits, and modes of livelihood of a very large number of juvenile delinquents. I have known lads to subsist for two whole days upon two cold potatoes rather than thieve; "it's a bad trade," "we can't starve," and "no one will give us work, what are we to do?" are common expressions. On the other hand, many are habituated to dishonesty, and make no secret of their profession; they "steal because they are used to it."

The statements of two boys, who had been taken up on "suspicion" a few days since, induced me the other evening, much against the wishes of my friends, to visit their lodgings. Wending my way along some of the most notorious streets in London, after some difficulty, and with the assistance of a policeman, I found out the house I had been looking for. Having made known my business to the "deputy," silence was proclaimed, and in the kitchen (which serves also as bed-room, parlour, etc.) I was introduced as the "gentleman from the Ragged School." Here I found fifteen men and boys, and two women; some others entering soon after increased the number to upwards of twenty. Their occupations, as far as I could gather from them, were one or two dock labourers, one paper-stainer, one a worker of wrought iron. One of the women said, "My husband is a dock labourer, but hasn't earned 7*s.* for the last seven weeks. I go out selling books, song-books, and the such like of them. Some days I take as much as 10*d.*, sometimes only 6*d.* Many of us go to bed without a supper, to pay for our lodging." Many had no answer, and were evidently of no "particular occupation." Several were huddled round the fire, while others were getting their tea, or, more properly, their supper; unless fortune should happen to smile upon them in their wanderings later in the evening, then they might be able to have another and more substantial meal. There was but one exception to their general appearance, which betokened that of the lowest state of moral degradation and suffering. This was one of the men, who apparently listened attentively to all I had to say, but had very little to communicate to me in return. Sometimes he would say, "Trade is very bad, sir; I don't know what's to become of us this winter." It was but little information that I could rely upon that was to be obtained here, so that I thought it prudent to retire; and asking the deputy to direct me to another house, (also in his possession,) he volunteered to be my guide. On our way, he informed me that the scene I was now going to witness would

be very different to what I had already seen. "They are mostly boys, you see," he continued; "and you will find them a complete lot of riffraff." Arriving at the house, he directed me to remain outside, while he opened the door, put his head inside the kitchen, and hallooed out lustily, "Silence; here's a gentleman come to speak with you." The room was in the most filthy condition; the dusky walls, as seen by the light of an oil lamp suspended from the ceiling, added only to the prevailing gloom. Round the room were low benches, with two or three tables, upon which many of the boys were seated. Round the fire were seated a number of men and boys, apparently discussing the fortunes of the day. The fœtid atmosphere was worse than I had ever before experienced; the suffocating stench almost overpowered me—but to see I went, and to see I was determined, if possible. Congregated together in this kitchen were between thirty and forty boys, women, and men, forming a scene of squalid wretchedness that it is hardly possible to conceive—here were all sizes and all ages. While I was talking with them others came dropping in, some recognising me. One old man claimed acquaintance with a minister of distinction now living—"Many years since I rode in a carriage with him and the Rev. ——, who, as you know, is dead." As an excuse to get from this room (which measured only about twelve feet by ten) for a few minutes, to breathe a purer atmosphere, (if I may be allowed the expression,) I asked my guide to allow me to see their sleeping apartments. He conducted me first into the "grand room," in which were eight beds; some of these were on the floor, while others were upon low ricketty bedsteads. In the room above were seven beds. Descending and passing through the kitchen, I entered the washhouse, which has lately been fitted up with bunks; this is a room measuring about ten feet by six or seven, and containing five bunks. Passing back again into the kitchen, I remained conversing with the lodgers for some time longer, inviting some of the boys to the school to partake of a plum-pudding, which I promised to provide. Taking my leave of them, and about to proceed from the house, the deputy said, "I want to speak to you alone, sir. You see what a set we have here; there's no doing much good with them; but I have one boy I should like you to see; he has been well brought up, but now he is lost." "Lost!" said I, the word ringing dolefully upon my ears—"lost!" "Yes, lost, sir; but I'll bring him to you." He soon appeared in the street, and by the light opposite I could perceive that his sallow-looking countenance betokened both mental and physical suffering. He had evidently once moved in a very superior station to the one he now occupies. The very touching and respectful replies to the questions that I put to him, made it both difficult and painful to elicit from him his previous history. "The reason I appear so different to the others is owing to my former position; I have moved in a very different sphere to the one you now see me in." I remarked to him, "You appear ill," and proffered my assistance to procure for him medical advice, for which he thanked me, observing that he felt the doctors could do but little for him now; "I shall not trouble any one long." I invited him to see me on the following morning, when his attenuated form, as seen by the light of day, prompted the most compassionate feeling. He then related to me the story of his life. "I was brought up very respectably, and received an expensive education. My uncle and my father were at the expense of my education jointly. My father was then captain of a ship; in consequence of his inability to pay his share for my education, I was compelled to leave school. He is now reduced through his extravagance; in fact, he is so poor that he is unable to keep the five children dependent upon him; it is not likely that he can afford to keep me. After the death of my mother, I was apprenticed on board a merchant-

vessel trading to North America. When I returned last voyage the captain discharged me out of pity. He could see I was not strong enough, and my cough was so troublesome as to make it difficult to perform my duties; in fact, everything was irksome to me. I had never been taught to look for a livelihood by my own exertion, but should not have minded that had I been strong enough. Had my mother been living I should not have gone to sea. My uncle was for two years mayor of Waterford, and is very rich. He will have nothing to do with me now. I met one of his sons in the street the other day, when he said to me, 'You must know my father well enough to know that it would be of no use whatever again to apply to him;' indeed, I have made up my mind never to trouble him again. I have a knowledge of Latin, and can read French pretty well, but cannot now speak it. I do not think of my former history much during the day, as I employ my time in reading, but cannot help thinking of it during the night; but I do not wish to think of it much."

As a contrast to the above, the following is from a sharp lad, living in the same house: "They call me by many names. Was taken up on suspicion last week with this ere one, (pointing to another lad,) but we were both discharged. We have both been before the magistrate this morning. He has promised to get him sent to sea; but he says I'm not tall enough, so that I can't go. Think I must get taken up again, for the more times I get taken before him the more likely it is he will do something for me. I have been to prison three times already. The first time was ten days, for breaking a window; then I had seven days for swearing at the task-master in the workhouse; and the last time they gave me six months of it—that was on suspicion of stealing a handkerchief. The gentleman said I did take it, but I didn't, so I was vexed and swore, and that's what they sent me to prison for. I liked the first two times very well; but when it came to six months, I didn't like it. I broke the window that I might get a lodging—I mean that I might get sent to prison. I went to Brixton once, and was taken up for singing 'Jim Crow;' but they let me off, and gave me 1*s*. Another time I was taken up at Croydon for singing. I got 1*s*. 2½*d*. by that, and they gave me a good breakfast before they discharged me. I would rather be taken up at Brixton than Croydon, because there is a lot of hot pipes in the cell—they call them steam pipes. At Croydon it's very cold—awful cold. I wouldn't mind being locked up at Brixton, because its so nice and comfortable; you can lay down and go to sleep so comfortably. I shall sell congreves all this winter if I can, and then in the summer, if I can raise a little stock, I shall go into the country; I shall take a box of blacking with me, that costs 3*d*. per dozen, and then you see I can get a penny a-piece for them. I have been singing, dancing, begging, and selling lucifers. I can't dance; I can only jump, and that pleases them as well. I don't exactly know my age; I think it must be seventeen. People tell me I don't look fourteen; but I can't help my looks. When I first went to the lodging-house they asked me what I did; I told them I begged. They said, 'Why don't you thieve? there's more to be made by that.' They are always practising upon one another; they tell the boys that if they do it well, they will take them along with them: if they don't do it well, they'll have nothing to do with them; they say, 'You will only get us into trouble.' My father was a cabinet-maker, but died about four years ago, and my mother more than two years ago. I wash my face sometimes every two days, sometimes not so often. Have had no shirt for more than two months; the last I had was so ragged that I sold it as old rags, and got three farthings for it. When I can't get enough to pay my lodging I beg; the policemen sometimes give me a penny or so; the one that was at the school the other night gave me twopence, so I had my

lodging for that night. There is to be a free-and-easy at our house to-morrow night; the men have put sixpence a piece, and given to 'Snob' to mind; they are going to have a good large plum-pudding and plenty of beer. There will be a nice lark then. The girls and the men sleep in the grand room; that is more tidy than the others; have never been in that yet. The owner of the lodging-house has got four of them altogether. He lets them; deputy pays 9*s.* a night for two. The room in which I slept last night has five bunks in it altogether; four boys slept in one, and three in each of the others, except one—a man and woman slept in that. In the room where I was before there was seven or eight beds. There is one a little larger than the others, in which they put eight of us the other night—three at the top, three at the bottom, and two across. (Another boy said, "There were seven in my bed.") They don't put so many in the other beds—not more than three generally. You would think them pretty clean to look at, but you don't know what's inside; the rank dossers (lodgers who do not sleep in a bed) only pay one penny a night; they sit up all night telling stories in the kitchen. At the other house where I slept they wouldn't let the boys bring in stolen goods; many of the neighbours complained about it, and said that was the reason the boys went thieving.

"To-day I have had nothing to eat—last Saturday I had plenty. Oh, didn't I have a lot then; I tore my coat to put it away; thought I should have had this pocket full too, but hadn't. I never sell my bread. If you steal a quartern loaf, and take it there, they will only give you a penny for it. They brought in nearly the half of a sheep last night; they offered the breast to a man opposite for 4*d.* If you speak for me, and I get the place I was talking to you about, I shall leave this lodging, and then I shall go to church; if I go now they turn me out. I went to the church up here, and the beadle pushed me out; he told me I was too dirty." Subsequently he informed me that "Snob" (the man who had charge of the house for deputy) had run away, and taken with him the money saved for the Christmas 'spree.' "He has taken a penny I gave him to mind for me," ("and a penny of mine," said another boy,) "with some bread and cheese."

While I was taking notes of the above, I was frequently interrupted by the other boys, one of whom said, "They run away with your 'wittles,' and steal your clothes in the night; it's no use to have good clothes; before I went to the 'model,' I left my clothes at the leaving-shop for eighteenpence, and put on some old rags. I never stole anything from them, nor have they stolen anything from me, because I hadn't anything for them to steal. They must steal, for they cannot get anything else. A great many things are brought into our place; the handkerchiefs they sell in the lane; some pawnbrokers wont take them in; some of them sell what they get before they come home. Two gold watches were brought in on Saturday, besides pieces of beef and poultry. I worked in Leadenhall market last week, carrying parcels; there were a good many of our lodgers there, some working, some stealing."

They generally confirmed the statement given, often reminding each other of something that had occurred which had been forgotten, or correcting each other in some few unimportant particulars, which have since been confirmed by the opportunity I have had of seeing them separately. "The press-gang go about in numbers, varying from eight to fourteen, assisting each other," one apparently making a bargain, or, as is too often the case, asking a question, while the companions escape with their booty.

With such facts it is not difficult to perceive the sad influence which the odious and demoralizing scenes constantly witnessed in these abodes of

filth and wretchedness must have upon the young especially. Perhaps two-thirds of the robberies committed in London are concocted in the low lodging-houses, and yet the question constantly occurs—How is the evil to be met? Certainly some plan has yet to be developed, by which the tuition of the lodging-house is to be counteracted. The erection of comfortable dormitories, providing better accommodation at equally low charges, might diminish these evils—but I must now leave this consideration.

CHANGE OF THE NAME—"RAGGED SCHOOLS."

A PARAGRAPH (which, we believe, originally appeared in the *Athenæum*) has been going the round of the newspapers, intimating that Lord Ashley proposes to substitute "Colonial Training Schools" for our present hard-earned "Ragged" title. In reply to several inquiries on the subject, we beg to assure our friends that such is by no means the case. No other name will do so well as the one we have adopted. There is certainly very little music in it, and much less poetry, except to the poor children themselves. The musical portion of the public *once* found fault with us on this ground, but the children never did. They said, "Give us schools, where we may learn what we are, and what we ought to be, and we care not what you call them, or where they are held." The last one in the kingdom who would consent to this change would be the noble lord, to whom this foolish proposal has been attributed. At almost every Ragged School meeting for the last twelve months, he has earnestly enforced the *necessity* and propriety of adhering to the present name. "We retain," says his lordship, "and *will retain*, the epithet and title whereby we are known—'Ragged Schools'—because it marks the line of our duty, and the sphere of our operations."

The new name referred to is altogether unsuitable and unnecessary. The schools are established more for the benefit of our own country than for the colonies. We send no *ragged* children there. Every emigrant, on leaving this country, may adopt the language of Scripture, and say, "One thing I know, that whereas I was *once* ragged, now I am clothed." We earnestly desire that an increased liberality may soon enable us to put that language in the lips of many more. Thus, with our *old* name, and a *new* outlet, we should be able greatly to diminish the number of those poor outcasts, of whom the present title is so sadly characteristic.

LECTURES TO THE OFFICERS AND TEACHERS OF RAGGED SCHOOLS.

THE First of a Course of Short Lectures (followed by Conversation) was delivered in the Field Lane School Room, on Wednesday Evening, January 9th, 1850, by the Rev. JOHN BRANCH. SUBJECT—*The present Physical, Moral, and Spiritual Condition of the Poorer Classes in London.*

WE regret that we are able to give but a very brief outline of this interesting lecture. It was throughout deeply interesting, as it contained many striking facts bearing on the subject, and illustrative of the wretched and depraved condition of our London poor. It was a statement of facts, not of poetry. Though the poor were, in many respects, better off than formerly, (as might be seen by Macaulay's and other histories,) yet there was a mass of corruption and moral wretchedness that defied all description. The moral condition of our fellow-men depends much

on their physical state. The Letters in the *Morning Chronicle* told something of this. The state of the poor needle-women also. There were persons in London who lived by picking up things at the ends of common sewers—they were called mud-larks—and many others half starving; and what was their moral state?—low and depraved. Take one scene in Drury Lane. In nine small rooms lived eighty-four persons, including twenty-three children. Even the cellars were let, and covered with straw to sleep on. In the same lane there are above twenty gin-palaces. The poorest class patronise these most. At Wapping there was another order of crime—dancing-rooms for young men and girls, sailors, etc., were very numerous there. One woman there kept twenty-four girls herself. Go to Rosemary Lane, Shoreditch, and Westminster, you find similar scenes. The dinner of many of the poorest class is garbage, picked up at a green-grocer's, and a little dripping and salt, while the bulk of their money goes to the gin-shops. The number of juvenile thieves in London show the destitution of London. There are always from two thousand to four thousand. In Shoreditch, in a house inhabited by bone-sellers, one man was found sleeping with another who had been three weeks dead. Another party were found playing at cards, on the top of the coffin of a comrade just dead, and holding their revels the same as ever. An instance occurred in Westminster of a woman selling her daughter for five shillings, and though that girl became reformed, the mother followed her old course of drunkenness. Her son hearing she was ill, had her taken to his own lodging till she was well, but in his absence she pawned all his things, and drank the money. Ragged Schools care for such lads and girls—going down to the very sediment of society. Another evil is low wages among the needle-women, tailors, etc. Instance three girls working at a jacket, paying for thread, fire, and candles, and only getting 10½*d.* for it when done!—living on tea and a red herring. Drinking is another great evil. Instance a harness plate-maker, earning from £3 to £4 a week, and yet borrowing one shilling on the Thursday to get through the week. Another evil, the poor laws—in many ways they tend to improvident habits among the poor. As an instance of ignorance, the case in *The Times* (January 9th) might be given, of a boy before the magistrate as a witness, who could not read—knew nothing of a Bible—never heard of God—knew nothing except, as he said, "to sweep a crossing." Among a large portion of the London poor, marriage was the exception—not the rule; and many poor children were brought into the world only to be deserted.

The Rev. Lecturer concluded his Address by exhorting all present to persevere in their labours, and try to rescue some of these poor neglected ones. A conversation ensued, and some striking facts were mentioned by those present, showing the awfully degraded condition of the poor in London.

The Second Lecture, of which the following is an abstract, was delivered by Mr. ANDERSON, on Wednesday Evening, Jan. 16*th.* SUBJECT—*The Causes at work for the Perpetuity and Increase of Immorality in the Metropolis.*

MUCH importance has justly been attached to the early impressions formed in the home of childhood. It is the first mould into which the future man is cast—where the seeds of good or evil are sown for future development. Hence God has arranged that the home of man should correspond to the dignity of his nature; forming a centre of love and attraction, in which his youthful faculties should be developed and matured. But the dwellings of the London poor are such, as if *intended* to produce an opposite effect. Recent disclosures have proved, that in a majority of cases they are fertile hot-beds of vice and crime, where the young are accustomed to such scenes as are totally destructive of all delicacy of feeling. Six hundred families living in forty-nine houses, making more than twelve families to each house, and sometimes containing nearly three thousand individuals, giving an average of sixty persons for each house, is a state of things not only to be found in

the neighbourhood of Grosvenor Square, but in many other parts of London may be found parallels in wretchedness, if not in numbers. There is not a more striking contrast, in the external condition of London, than the state (and almost contiguity in many cases) of the dwellings of the rich and poor. The smoke arising from the dusky dens of low debauchery, and the styes of drunkenness and profligacy, often sweeps across the windows of the embellished mansions of wealth and refinement.

"Ill fares the land, to numerous ills a prey,
When wealth accumulates, and men decay."

Intimately connected with the dwellings are the low lodging-houses for the vagrant and neglected poor. There is no species of crime perpetrated in London but the first lessons of which have often been imparted in these filthy dens. Children of respectable parents are often decoyed into them, and the first accounts they receive of their children is either from the jailor or the police. Parties coming from the country, by going into these places for a night's lodging, are thus plunged into the depths of wickedness, and speedily manufactured into open profligates. Most of the lodging-house keepers purchase at about a third of the real value, whatever articles the children can steal during the day or night.

The next evil is the want of education. This is not a "cause at work," for it is more of a negative than a positive character. But it leaves the child a prey to ignorance, and its moral being an open receptacle for every form of criminal impurity. Children are often ushered into the world, their memories only stored with the oaths of a drunken father—the curses and cruelties of a brutish mother—scenes of profanity and lewdness, and lessons of deception and cunning, which formed the chief instructions received within the walls of their gloomy homes.

Thousands of unfortunate youths, reared in comfortable yet *ungodly* homes, are sent out into the world destitute of religious principles, a prey to every snare, and soon become the victims of sensuality and vice. The so-called accomplishments of the age are but a poor legacy for a parent to leave his child, and there are thousands who receive nothing more. Hence they soon find their way into a state of society where such accomplishments are not required.

The poor require not merely a literary, but a *domestic* education. They require to be trained to *act*, as well as think—not only to habits of industry, but even more to habits of *economy*. They require more comfortable dwellings, but they also require an education which will teach them to *keep* their dwellings comfortable. Poverty is a cause of crime, but improvident habits are often the cause of poverty.

If it be true, and we believe it, that one hundred thousand children in London are growing up without any education at all, and that thirty thousand of these have no homes but arches and lodging-houses, and hence are without the smallest amount of *domestic* training—if we add to these, the enormous number of those whose education, either at home or in school, is little better than a name—we have before us an awful field of unprotected spirits, ushered into the world with nothing in their hands but weapons for their own destruction—having no desire for good—a strong affinity for all that is evil—many of whom will soon perish by their own vices; and the remainder, if left alone, will become the reproducers—the living disseminators of their own wickedness! Such a spectacle might well arouse the church of Christ from her guilty slumbers, and make her both ashamed and afraid to utter that sentence by which she has long disgraced herself—"What have I to do with these."

One of the greatest crime-producing agents in London is *drunkenness*. It is the parent of many vices, and the handmaid of them all. Without committing ourselves to the extreme views that are maintained on this subject, we have no hesitation in saying, that a *majority* of the six thousand public-houses and beer-shops in London are wholesale manufactories of disease and crime—dens of infamy and debauch—withering up the very vitals of our social happiness—exhibiting around their clanking doors their haggard and brutalized victims, and both appearing as a national disgrace, our rulers' sin, and the harbingers of our country's ruin!

A majority of all the officials who have to do with pauperism and crime in the kingdom, have proved that drunkenness is one of the greatest causes of both these evils; and many of the prisoners themselves have reiterated the same statements.

And yet the enormous number of public-houses is not only perpetuated, but greatly increased every year. There is scarcely a new street erected in the metropolis, but its quietude is marred, and its respectability impaired, by the opening of one or more of these places of drunkenness and sin.

No nation can long stand against the increasing enormity of this blackening scourge. Is there no means, we ask, of trampling on the neck of this fell destroyer —of breaking the wheels of this mighty engine of destruction? Or is it still to increase in its ravages and power, until our country shall become a spectacle to other lands—signalized by judgments, as it is now distinguished in mercy? The fault lies not merely with the drunkards themselves; for who licensed sixty-seven public-houses in one street, in the neighbourhood of the London Docks, ten in another lane, and eighteen in a third? No man will say that all these places are *necessary*; even were they Ragged Schools there would be too many, especially if the public-houses were away. From evidence given before the House of Commons it was shown that, in three years, 93,569 persons were taken up for drunkenness in the streets of the metropolis. In 1848, the excise and import duties on wines and spirits amounted to £10,807,000, and this at the lowest computation must give no less a sum than £43,000,000 spent in one year on drink, in England alone!

We do not say that legislative measures can cure this growing evil, but if the number of public-houses was reduced one-half, especially in low neighbourhoods, where they are now most numerous, and the duty and licenses were raised thirty per cent., the houses put under stringent regulations, and properly visited—this would remove much temptation out of the way of the poor, and show that the Government of the country discountenanced this dreadful evil, which now seems to be fostered and encouraged.

Intimately connected with, and much upheld by drunkenness, is another evil, which, were it not for its enormity, we should pass over in silence—we mean prostitution. A protecting spell seems to be thrown around this crime, which hides it both from punishment and reproof. Not one more deplorable spectacle does London exhibit than the (at least) eight thousand wretched victims of this destroying vice. Without God, without virtue, without health, without friends, and without hope. Seldom pitied, seldom prayed for, and seldom saved!

A large majority of the places of public amusement in London are decidedly immoral—from the low penny theatres and saloons in the dingy and filthy lanes, to the more majestic *lies* retailed at Haymarket and Covent Garden. Even the "respectable" theatres in London make no great pretensions to strict morality. When alluding to some of their indecencies, a German prince remarks, "It is a most strange thing, that in no country upon earth are those afflicting and humiliating spectacles so openly exhibited as in religious and decorous England."

Were the tendencies of the cheap theatres of an elevating or moral nature, they would not long exist. In all such cases the dishes are studiously cooked, to suit the appetites of the guests. Without doing this they cannot succeed. Their customers will not pay for a commodity unsuited to their tastes. It is easy, therefore, to imagine the character of those performances, which will satisfy the cravings of the most abandoned and profligate youth of the community. The songs that are sung, the profane expressions used, the opportunities for drinking, besides the commingling together of both sexes of the baser portions of the community, (all of which we have personally witnessed in these places,) render them seedplots of immorality, and schools of crime.

One other prolific source of crime in the metropolis is *pauperism*. The moral evils of *street* pauperism must be apparent to every one. We can scarcely pass along a single thoroughfare in the metropolis, but we are met by the most shameless exhibitions of every species of human deformity, for the purpose of exciting a sympathy which every prudent person must feel it his duty to restrain. It is now well known, that persons obtain their living by letting out garments to professional beggars on hire—tattered, torn, or respectable, as the case may be. The poor helpless children, too, hired like beasts of burden, to wander the long and weary day—cold or wet—in the company of haggard and brutalized men and women, to retail their lies in the streets, in order that a drunken mother may purchase gin in the evening. Were these poor children taken from their cruel task-masters, and placed

in Industrial Schools, and their worthless parents, if found, compelled to work for their support, it would lessen materially this immoral traffic.

The present *legal* system of charity has an immoral tendency. It begets improvident habits, and produces no gratitude. Man is naturally an indolent being, and he will neither be frugal nor industrious while he knows there is an arm on which he can lean, or a last resource between him and absolute suffering. He will not provide for the future while he believes that in the workhouse there is a provision for that future already—a provision established by law—for which no one pays, and for which he has no right to be grateful. (In 1847 the pauperism of Middlesex alone cost £520,687.)

The vagrant wards in the workhouses very often afford convenient accommodation for vagabonds, robbers, and thieves, where the inexperienced are tutured in the arts of deception and plunder.*

We must be careful not to pauperise the children in the Ragged Schools more than they now are. Let feelings of self-dependence and self-respect be perseveringly inculcated. Old clothing given to the naked is well, but a well-managed clothing fund is much better, and ought to form a wholesome substitute (which is being done) in every Ragged School. Banish that degrading, pauperish feeling by every proper means. Wherever practicable (except on special occasions) let the *principal* almsgiving in Ragged Schools consist of free education, love, and sympathy. Let nothing else be given for nothing, if pence, half-pence, or even farthings, can be obtained for it, and thus engender feelings of self-support and a spirit of self-dependence.

The last agent we mention is *the immorality of the London press.* This is one of the most formidable evils with which we have to contend, and almost outstripping all others in rapidity and power. No serious mind can view it without apprehension. A number of periodicals have been commenced during the past year, and are now commanding an immense circulation, of a more immoral and decidedly polluting nature than any previously existing. Publications which, but a few years ago, were suppressed by the authorities, have again made their appearance, and are exposed for sale in every part of the metropolis. There is more literary filth issued weekly from Holywell Street alone than is sufficient to poison the minds of the whole youth of London. The present circulation in London of unstamped immoral publications—a large number of which are decidedly pernicious—must be upwards of three hundred thousand weekly, or fifteen millions six hundred thousand annually. And, besides this, there is the enormous weekly importation of French prints and novels, and translations of most abominable and filthy pamphlets, unfit even to enumerate. "Thousands of the young are coming into weekly contact with this contaminating agency—drinking at this death-fountain, which is scattering moral desolation wherever it flows." With all this before their eyes, the Christians of London have scarcely commenced in earnest, to counteract the aggressions of this dreadful and potent enemy. We have very little religious literature suited to the neglected poor, and none at all for the children in the Ragged Schools. If we provide nothing of a more entertaining character for *them*, than class books, and Bibles, and hymn-books, they will provide a literature for themselves, which will counteract much of our teaching. This evil might be greatly met by a small *monthly* periodical, suited to their peculiar habits and attainments.

We must hastily conclude this dark and dreadful catalogue. The agencies mentioned are chiefly *aggressive*. Multitudes of others have not even been named. Enough has been said to show, that in all our efforts at good-doing the forces are strong that are against us, and the battle is only commencing. We have lost much ground already—let us make haste to retake it. The best interests of our country are involved in the struggle, for every one of these agents is endangering its stability. They are casting a moral mildew over many of the brightest and most hopeful spirits of our land; but by a combination of well-directed efforts, and the blessing of God upon our labours, we may rescue many of the most likely victims from their foulest snares, and help to roll back that fearful tide of iniquity which is now threatening to overwhelm us.

* "The Arab of the City," in the pages of this Magazine, will shortly illustrate this fact.

Literary Notices.

The Happy Family. A Picture from Life. By THOMAS WALLACE. London: W. F. Ramsay.

IN this most interesting narrative we have a description of one of those homes—rare places on this weary earth—where all the members of the family are happy in each other's love, and happy in the favour of God. We cordially recommend it to the attention of both parents and children, trusting it may be the means, under God, of inducing others to "set their house in order," and to strive after that true blessedness, enjoyed so abundantly by this "happy family."

The Teachers' Collect Book; or, The Church Collects analyzed and illustrated, after a New Method, for the Use of Teachers in Church of England Schools. In Two Parts. By the REV. HENRY KITTON. London: J. J. Guillaume.

WE believe that very many Teachers in the Church of England Schools have long felt such a work as this to be a great desideratum. We can fully assure them, that in this admirable manual they will find all the assistance they desire. It is our regret, that at present we cannot enter into the details of the work, but after carefully examining it, we can confidently award it our highest recommendation. We trust that Teachers, and the Church generally, will *practically* manifest their gratitude to the author by securing for it a liberal patronage.

God in History; or, Facts illustrative of the Presence and Providence of God in the Affairs of Men. By the Rev. JOHN CUMMING, D.D. London: John Farquhar Shaw.

THIS is an extension of the lecture delivered by the author, on the same subject, in Exeter Hall, to the *Young Men's Christian Association.* In the present instance he has filled "up the outline, by embodying in it facts, and incidents, and occurrences, necessarily omitted, or briefly alluded to in the lecture." As that lecture is already before the public, we need only add, that those acquainted with the writings of the gifted author will not be disappointed by the perusal of the elegant little volume before us.

Arithmetical Exercises, adapted to Collective Teaching. By GEORGE WHITE, Head Master of the Abbey Street Schools, Bethnal Green Road. London: Houlston and Stoneman.

MR. WHITE, in his brief sketch of the method of using his Arithmetical Exercises, says, that his purpose in preparing them was, "to lessen dependence on monitors, to induce the adoption of a collective method of teaching arithmetic, and to engrain the principles and uses of this science in the minds of an increased number of pupils."

As we have seen these exercises used, not only in Mr. White's, but in some of our Ragged Schools, we can speak from actual observation in very high terms of them. They appear in all respects fitted to fulfil the purpose the author had in their preparation. We think, where they are used according to his directions, they cannot fail to secure the attention, and test the proficiency of the pupil, and prevent the indolent or inattentive, or more deficient portion of the class, from sheltering themselves under the more forward. Besides, the application which this plan of teaching arithmetic demands from the scholar, seems well adapted to serve the purposes of his education, for its great end is not the imparting a certain amount of knowledge, but the formaiton of habits of patient thought and study in the act of obtaining that knowledge. So we need hardly say, that we have great pleasure in recommending the Exercises to the attention of our readers.

Books Received.—Bishop's Study of the Mind, for the Use of Senior Classes in Schools. Longman & Co.—The Murdered Mother. J. Groom.—The Model Parish.—Consolation for the Afflicted.—Communion with God in Private. London: Wertheim & Macintosh.

The Children's Gallery.

THE BOYS AND GIRLS WHO WENT TO AUSTRALIA.

Most all the big boys and girls in the Ragged Schools have heard about Australia. But they don't know how far away it is. And it isn't very easy to tell them. If I asked a boy how far it is from St. Paul's to the Bank, he would say, "Just five minutes' walk, Sir." But if I asked, how far it is from St. Paul's to Australia, he might say, "It's such a *long* piece away, I don't know how far." But that is all he could tell; and no wonder. For there are no streets like Cheapside leading to Australia, and they can't put up mile-stones on the tops of the big waves. But supposing they could—suppose they had got a large stone stuck up in the sea, at the end of every mile—and suppose a boy could swim past seven of these stones every hour—even if he swimmed day and night, it would take him four or five months to get to Australia. But a boy couldn't swim far, for the waves would soon get over his head, and then the great sharks, with their long teeth, would eat him up. He wouldn't be more than a bite for them. But sharks can't get into the ships—they are made so strong and so comfortable; the beds are so nice and warm, that people sleep as well in them as they did when at home.

Although Australia is so far away, yet a great many boys and girls from the Ragged Schools have gone there, and many others wanted to go. They heard it was such a nice place—plenty of victuals, plenty of work, and good wages. So they were anxious to go. But they could not get away. Why? Because they had not got twenty pounds to pay for their passage. They were not so diligent at school as they might have been. They could not read and write well enough. Some did not like to work; they liked better to beg, or to idle about the streets. They would go one evening to school, and stay away the next, and so no one would pay their passage for them. Boys and girls who don't behave themselves, and are not willing to work, should never be allowed to go to such a nice place as Australia.

Some of those boys and girls, who were sent out last year, have written home to us, telling how they get on. Some have written very long letters, telling us all about the sea, and the ships, and the great fishes they saw. And then they tell us a great deal about Australia—what like a place it is, and what they are doing. I have got such a bundle of their letters beside me now, it would take you four or five days to read them. But I shall only pick out some of the nicest bits for you, and let you hear what they say.—

A Storm at Sea—Scotch Mist.

Some people say, "a hard beginning is a good beginning." So it has proved to the boy who gives an account of the storm. He went from Broadwall School, and he must have been *very* diligent. Read carefully over what he says, and then try if *you* can write as well:—

"We have arrived in safety, and thank God for it. We had a bad passage from Plymouth to the line; we had nothing else but calm all the way. When we were within eight days' sailing of the Cape of Good Hope, they found we were short of provisions, but we still kept on, for a heavy gale of wind set in about the middle watch, which nearly carried our fore-mast away, but, thank God, it did pass away without doing harm. It was awful to look at the sea, for it rose mountains high, and the ship being light made it worse for us, for she rocked to and fro awfully; the wind lasted for about a week, and then it was calm again for three days; the breeze springing up again, we went right into the Straits, where it was awful. We had a Scotch mist set in, which is a fine rain, and the wind began to blow till it was quite a gale; then we were surrounded by rocks on every side, and the sea washing over the breakers, we expected every moment to be dashed to pieces, and the wind freshing to a hurricane, we were in a

nice state. Every sail was taken in, and the current carried us five knots an hour back again. We were there for about a day and a half; about twelve o'clock of the second there was not a breath of air, and the sea was as calm and as smooth as ice. Three days after we left the Straits we came in sight of Sidney Head, and the fourth day at six o'clock we hoisted the Union Jack up to the fore-mast for a pilot; he came on board, and stopped for two or three hours, and then left us all the day. We were nearly all suffocated by the burning wind; it was just like standing before a large furnace, it was so hot. As soon as the pilot left us, a gale of wind came on all of a sudden, that we thought she had struck against a rock; she shook awfully, for the sails were out, but in less than ten minutes they were all down; the wind continued to blow all the night very hard, for we went at the rate of fourteen knots an hour. On Saturday night we left Sidney; we reached Moreton Bay on the Tuesday following, but then an accident occurred which made us all sad, by the death of a woman, who has left four young children, one only a week old; we buried her on an island in the Bay; she was put into a coffin, and rowed ashore by the seamen. We went ashore on the 16th and 17th; on the 20th I went to Ipswich, where I have a good situation as gentleman's servant; I have £20 a year, board, lodging, plenty to eat and drink. I have had a merry Christmas of it."

A Boy who gave his Mother good Advice.

He says:—"Things are very cheap here. You can buy meat, and the best of it, at the best butchers' shops, at three half-pence to two-pence per pound, such as rump-steaks or mutton-chops. I am very comfortable. I am getting twelve shillings a week, board and lodging, and that is called *very bad*. I took the first offer that came to me. If it please God to spare me my health and strength, I hope in six months I will be getting a pound a week. I hope you have took my advice, and kept yourself away from drink—but I fear you have not. Dear Mother, I hope you will keep yourself happy and comfortable, especially my brother; for if you do not take care of him, I know what will be his doom. It will be the best thing you can do to take my advice, and you will profit by it."

How Three Boys liked the Voyage—How they fared—And what they saw.

One says:—"I am quite well, and have been so ever since we sailed. I am very comfortable and happy on board. We have got into beautiful winds, which are carrying us along at the rate of ten miles an hour, and we have been going so for about a fortnight. There are nineteen of us from the different schools; we are all together, and agree pretty well. The doctor and the captain have been amusing themselves for the last few days shooting at albatrosses, and other large birds from off the poop; but although these birds measure (some of them) eighteen or nineteen feet when their wings are extended, they have not succeeded in hitting one. We have caught no fish, except a small dolphin and a young shark, and with the exception of porpoises and flying-fish we have seen none other. We give our cook plenty to do in baking cakes and puddings all day long. We make first-rate cakes and puddings by soaking our biscuits, and then mixing it up with a little flour. Our provisions are very good, and we have quite as much as we can eat. Tell the school-boys that I like it very much, and I should like to see some of them follow me, and if any of them come, write and let me know, and I will look out for them, and be happy to see them."

Another boy, who writes from the ship, says:—"I am in excellent health and spirits—have not been sick. We have had a little rough weather, nothing to speak of. I am now running with nothing but my very shirt and trowsers. It is like the middle of summer. We have had a splendid voyage as yet, and in excellent health and spirits. You would like to be at sea such weather as this. There is a bright moon above our heads, and the blue water under us, clothed with innumerable specks like fire."

A third boy, who went in a different ship, says:—"We had a pleasant voyage, and excellent captain. He did all that laid in his power, both in comforting the people, and trying to prevent sickness in the ship. We nearly always had

good winds, and we passed Palmyra Island January 19th, with a stiff breeze from the north-east. We pursued further on our journey till we came to the *line*, where we had above a week's calm, and the captain caught five sharks, one seven feet eight and a half inches in length. We had the pleasure of seeing different kinds of fish—the porpoise, the boneto, and the whale—and getting towards our destination, we passed Trinadada Island, where the captain caught seven albatrosses, one of them measured eleven feet in wings. They are birds about the size of the English swan, and the beak is hooked like a hawk's. We still keep on with fair winds and studding sails set. While passing the Cape of Good Hope we had a little more strong wind, but fair for us, and we passed St. Paul's Island March 22nd. We saw it at twelve o'clock, about fifty miles a-head of us, and at six at night it was out of sight. We kept on with fair winds till the 9th of April, about eight o'clock at night, when we heard a sailor from the top-mast-head cry out, '*Land on the larboard bow!*' The next morning we entered the Bay of Port Philip, and staid there till the Monday following, when the settlers came on board to hire us."

What Boys and Girls have to do in Australia, and how much they get for doing it.

"I WRITE to let you know how I get on at my new home. I am keeping sheep, at one of Mr. Austin's out-stations. I am hired for twelve months (being the first move I could make in the country) at £12 per year, but I expect I shall soon get £15.

"I have got a very nice time of it. I have to get the breakfast and supper ready for the shepherds, and that is all I have to do; then I go out native cat hunting, and make rugs of their skins. I am going to have a dog, (half native and half bull,) for the purpose of hunting kangaroos. It is a very nice country for those who like to make their minds happy and comfortable, as very few do except us Bushmen. Many new comers go *cranky* for the first week or so, if they are sent shepherding. But when I go out with the sheep I go at sunrise, take a good lump of damper and beef, my Jew's-harp, pipe, and tinder-box, and go and sit in some *mimi*, and let my sheep feed out a-head, and then I am as happy as a woodcock. This is a rare country for living; it will never cost you anything for food if you are on the tramp up to the new country, you can go from one hut to the other. We camp our sheep out at night, so that if the wild dogs come and take any we are not answerable.

"I can assure you it looks stunning to see us when we are going on the tramp to fetch a flock of sheep. We have to carry our kit at our back, like soldiers, and lay under some green tree at night, the opossums jumping from bough to bough—me and three more had to do this when we fetched seven thousand sheep from a settler."

Another boy says:—"The country is a beautiful place, and I have got a good master. I get ten shillings per week, and board and lodgings for the first six months; after that I shall get, I dare say, double, as I am at present a shepherd. I have got a nice dog, so if any of the sheep should stray, I have no trouble, but just to say, 'Fetch him back.' I go out of a morning at sunrise, and all I have to do is to see that my flock don't part. I lay down and read all day, then at sunset I come home, have my supper, and go to bed. Coming from England to Australia is like coming from a dirty town to the garden of paradise. You can get fine beef or mutton ¾*d.*, 1*d.*, and 1½*d.* per pound. The young girls have at the rate of £28 per year. Married couples at the rate of £48 per year. Dear Father and Mother, I wish you would come out; I think you could get out free if you were to try. Father and you would get the above wages. There are girls not near so big or so old as Elizabeth are getting from £7 to £12 per year, and board and lodging. Teddy, too, in a year or two's time, would get £15 per year, as a shepherd boy. All that the women have to do is to cook for the shepherds. Father would have to be a shepherd, to do just the same as I do. There might be two shepherds at a station, and perhaps only the man and wife. If you would come out I would never think of coming home. Dear Father, if you would not like to be a shepherd you might work at your trade; you would get 7*s.* 6*d.* to 8*s.* per day. The rations the married couples get is enough to keep a whole

family. The natives are very kind to the white men. *There is nothing in this country that will hurt you* unless you hurt them first.

What the Boys eat on Board, and what they get to wear.

"We embarked from the Depôt on Friday, and were tugged to Gravesend, which we reached at five o'clock. On Sunday morning we had Divine service, and likewise an address, and the same in the afternoon. On Monday afternoon, after an address by the representative of the Commissioners, he bid us good-bye, and told us, all we had to do was to behave ourselves, and at the end of the voyage we should be able to obtain good situations. You likewise asked me to give you an account of our living—we have biscuits, preserved meats, tea, coffee, salt pork, salt beef, peas, flour, suet, potatoes, rice, sugar, butter, plums, vinegar, mustard, salt. We have as much as we can eat. The clothes are two pairs of canvass trowsers, two pairs of flannel drawers, two blue Guernseys, six shirts, four pocket handkerchiefs, three neckerchiefs, suit of moleskin, six pairs of stockings, pair of white braces, comforter, and an excellent pilot coat; needles, threads, cotton, tape, combs and brushes for the hair, and trunks for the clothes, and six towels, and everything to make us comfortable. I thank Mr. Joyce for the kind attention he gave me while a candidate for emigration, and for his kindness in giving me the writing paper. We have Divine service every Sunday morning and afternoon, and also an address. But, kind Sir, permit me now to give a little information of

THE STORM.

We started from Gravesend on Monday, about five o'clock, and the wind being rather rough, we were obliged to cast anchor. On Tuesday morning we made another effort to get to the Nore, when the wind being still against us, we were obliged to cast anchor again. On Wednesday morning, the ship rolling mountains high, we were all sea-sick. About five o'clock, the wind still tremendously high, the cable snapped, and carried away the anchor; another anchor was soon prepared; the wind still increasing, the second anchor was carried away, and taking with it 540 feet of table chain; and the third anchor was soon prepared, and we offered many prayers that the last anchor might catch. The Lord heard our prayers, and the anchor caught. The next morning the sailors told us that had the anchor not caught we should have been wrecked, not being above one hundred yards away from the Middle Sands, off Shields. We heard that two ships were wrecked on the sands close by us, and all hands perished; but God being our guide, we were all saved. I thought on the night that I was in the church, when you told me about the sea.

"P.S.—I am very happy, and all of us, and I hope I shall never regret of knowing Clare Market Ragged School. Please, kind Sir, to give my thanks to all the friends and subscribers of the school. I shall write again when I am there, and tell you of the state of Australia what I know. I shall have a good account to give."

Winter Time in Australia.

A boy says:—"Now is winter time in this country. We have had no snow here, but very hard rains. This morning there was ice seen as thick as a shilling; the first time ice has been seen for some years. If any of the lads wish to know—tell them to write to me with their directions, for I should be glad to let them know anything about this splendid country."

THE RAGGED CHILD'S RESOLUTION.

Shall Christians care for me,
And teach me in their school,
And I not always try to be
Obedient to their rule?

Oh, no! forbid it love,
Forbid it gratitude,
That I should inattentive prove,
Or riotous and rude.

Then let me quiet sit,
And treasure up each line,
And try to cheer their hearts a bit
Whose kindness softens mine.

J. P.

Intelligence.

DEPTFORD RAGGED SCHOOL, DUNCAN YARD, HIGH STREET.

The Annual Tea and Public Meeting was held in Tanners' Hill School-room, on Tuesday Evening, Nov. 27th, 1849, D. W. Wire, Esq., in the Chair. The Meeting was opened by the children singing a hymn, after which Prayer was offered by the Rev. J. Kingsford. The Secretary then read the Report, which stated, that in the month of April last a paid female teacher was engaged, and who, as well as the master, is employed five evenings in the week, besides giving gratuitous assistance on the Sabbath evenings. The attendance of the children varied with the seasons—low in summer, and in the winter the rooms are filled. The girls are taught needlework, and arrangements are making to form a tailor's class for boys. A provident clothing fund for the benefit of the children was about to be established, by which habits of economy and industry would be cultivated. The Report added, that very much more good might be done were the funds adequate; as with very little outlay beyond the teachers' salary, a daily Infant School might be established, and the former parts of the Sabbath might be occupied both for children and adults, if more personal assistance was afforded.

The Treasurer, J. Atchison, Esq., read the financial statement, (from which it appeared that the donations and subscriptions for the year only amounted to about £55,) and expressed a hope that the charity, under God's blessing, might be permanent and prosperous.

The Rev. Dr. Carlile, in moving the first Resolution, expressed his opinion, grounded on personal experience, that the moment a child has attained moral discrimination, that moment it is capable of receiving moral culture, to discriminate between what is morally right and what is morally wrong—what is pleasing to God and what is displeasing to him. From which fact, he argued the advantages which must result from an *Infant* Ragged School. He then adverted to the subject of *Industrial Classes.* He was of opinion that the introduction of such classes in the Deptford Ragged School would be conferring a benefit on the parish and upon the nation, to teach the juvenile population who attended those schools to do something for their support. Was it not, he added, infinitely better for the community to instruct them in this way, than for these outcasts to be thrown upon the nation or upon the parish union, and their support to be paid for in the form of taxation?

The Rev. Dr. Hewlett, in seconding the Resolution, adverted to the *industrial character* of these schools, in support of which he gave an account of some boys who were taken into the Ragged School in King Edward Street, Mile End, and were trained in the industrial classes; formerly they were thieves, but are now honest boys, and have the prospect of receiving good wages; he then referred to the Reports of the Ragged School Union, wherein will be found stated, numerous instances of good having been effected by the industrial classes. As the system, he added, of establishing Infant Ragged Schools had already been crowned with success, we therefore appeal to you this evening to know, whether you will or not, with the prospect of conferring upon the neighbourhood an increased benefit, come forward to help in establishing an *Infant Ragged School in Deptford.*

The Rev. J. Russell delivered a very interesting and impressive address to the children; after which they sung the Doxology, and were dismissed to their respective homes.

The Meeting was afterwards addressed by the Rev. J. Aldis, Mr. Cuthbertson, from the Ragged School Union, Rev. J. Dulling, Rev. T. Timpson, Rev. H. R. Jeula, Rev. J. Kingsford, and the Chairman. A Collection was made at the close of the Meeting, which amounted to upwards of £7.

SPICER STREET RAGGED SCHOOL, SPITALFIELDS.

A Public Meeting on behalf of these Schools was held in the British School-rooms, Abbey Street, on December 3rd, 1849, H. E. Gurney, Esq., in the Chair. The Chairman briefly addressed the Meeting on the importance of the ob-

ject. The Report stated, that the place in which the schools are held was formerly a dye-house; but it is much too small to accommodate the children who wish to attend. The Committee are anxious to raise funds to purchase the lease of the building, which would not only lessen the yearly rent, but enable them to erect more commodious schools upon the site. The crowded state of the present room renders it extremely unhealthy both for teachers and scholars. The Sabbath School is conducted by voluntary teachers, but they are often so few in number, that those who attend have frequently fifteen children to each class.

An important fact occurs in connection with the Day School. Three hundred children have been admitted during the year, not more than twenty of whom knew their letters, *and six only could read.* Fifteen can now read the Testament; thirty can read easy lessons, and forty spell words of four letters. Several children have passed into more respectable schools during the year. The average attendance is one hundred and forty. Great praise is due to their devoted mistress, who, during the cholera, visited the children and their parents when ill and dying of that dreadful malady. The Evening School is much improved; formerly they pelted the master with stones and mud, but now they come orderly, and conduct themselves well in school.

The Report further stated, that Industrial Classes had been formed, the benefits of which had exceeded the expectations of the Committee; but it would be impossible to carry on this most important branch of their operations unless the funds were *considerably increased.* This would require to be done speedily, as there was now a balance due to the Treasurer of £10. 19*s.* 6*d.*

T. F. Buxton, Esq., then moved the adoption of the Report. He said, there was one point which he conceived they ought to keep in mind when discussing the subject of Ragged Schools, and that was independent of the good which these institutions vouchsafed upon the children brought under their influence; they had the still further tendency to lessen the amount of crime, and the criminal expenditure of the country; and, consequently, had an influence personal to every one who was called upon to pay for that expenditure. In a selfish point of view, they ought to feel interested in them. It was not only the amount of property stolen by these wretched children which they had to take into account, but they must also include the immense sums expended in prosecuting and punishing them for those offences; and after making up a grand total of all these, he was sure they must all come to the conclusion, that the good old maxim, "Prevention is better than cure," was the true one; and being of that opinion they would exert themselves in the removal of ignorance and vice, from among that class of the community who could not do it for themselves. The Ragged Schools, he considered, were excellent means of enlightening these destitute children, and thereby diminishing the amount of crime. Viewing, therefore, the matter in a selfish point of view, there was sufficient inducement for them to aid the good work.

The Meeting was afterwards addressed by Mr. White, Mr. Althans, Mr. Griffiths, Joseph Payne, Esq., Rev. T. G. Williams, and Mr. H. R. Williams.

LAYING THE FIRST STONE OF THE HOXTON RAGGED SCHOOLS.

ALTHOUGH in the above locality the usual variety of free schools have been from time to time established, and to which recently had been added a Ragged School, yet all have been found unequal to the requirements of a district abounding in ignorance, where, in one small spot, out of 61 children under fourteen years of age, 51 attended no school whatever; and out of 33 adults, 16 were unable to read, and but three attended any place of Divine worship. With a view to remedy these evils, a Committee was formed to collect subscriptions, etc., for the purpose of erecting a building suitable to the wants of this destitute neighbourhood, to be called "The Hoxton Ragged Schools;" and, upon application, a most appropriate site was liberally presented for the purpose by H. C. Sturt, Esq.

Notwithstanding that the subscriptions were still £400 below the amount required to complete the building, the Committee, feeling confident of being supported by the inhabitants of this locality, determined upon commencing the undertaking, and Tuesday, the 11th

of December, was fixed for performing the ceremony of laying the foundation stone, which the Right Hon. Lord Ashley, M.P., had kindly undertaken to perform. At two o'clock precisely the noble lord, accompanied by two of his sons, arrived on the ground, and were immediately conducted to "the stone," which bore the following inscription:—

"HOXTON RAGGED SCHOOLS.—The freehold site on which these schools are erected was the gift of H. C. Sturt, Esq. This stone was laid by the Right Hon. Lord Ashley, M.P., Dec. 11, 1849. 'A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth,'—Prov., chap. xvii., verse 8.—Charles Rooke, Esq., Treasurer; John Tarring, Esq., Architect; Silas Honeywill, Builder."

Verses read by Joseph Payne, Esq., after the laying, by the Right Hon. Lord Ashley, M.P., of the First Stone of a Ragged School at Hoxton:

This stone is laid in faith; and soon
The walls will stand complete;
And ragged children here will tune
The voice to music sweet.

Here many a half clad shivering form,
Will see within its reach
Two bright fires—one of coals to warm,
And one of love to teach.

God speed the wish, and bless the aims,
Of those who thus are found
To feel the wants, and urge the claims,
Of wretched ones around.

God bless the peer, whose honour'd hand,
Has grac'd our deed to-day;
The foremost of the noble band,
Who work, and give, and pray.

And when the coronets of earth
His brow no more shall share,
May he, as one of royal birth,
A crown of glory wear.

God bless the friend whose spirit glows
With zeal so warm that he,
The ground on which we build bestows
In perpetuity.

God bless the few whose liberal hearts,
With liberal means combined,
Give largely, that of ample parts
The building we may find.

God bless the many who, although
Their profits are but few,
Their mites into our treasury throw,
And what they can, they do.

God speed our plans in every way;
And give a strong desire
To all around, from day to day,
To work and never tire.

That when the roof shall finished be,
Made well the walls to fit,
Brought forth we may the topstone see,
And shout "Grace, grace to it!"

And may we find, while thus we move
The lump of sin to leaven;
This Ragged School at Hoxton prove,
Another gate to Heaven!

ELDER WALK RAGGED SCHOOLS, ISLINGTON.

A Public Meeting was held on Thursday Evening, December 13th, at Baker's Rooms, Islington, to hear the Report of the Committee of Elder Walk Ragged Infant Day School, — Rudal, Esq., Barrister, in the Chair.

This school has been in operation about seventeen months, and is situate in one of the lowest and most densely populated localities of Islington. The little building was raised mainly through the instrumentality of Mr. Chivers, late City Missionary for the District, assisted by several Christian friends in the neighbourhood.

Within the walls of this little building there have been congregated day by day from 60 to 80, and for some weeks as many as 105 poor children, whose parents are unable to provide them with the simplest moral or religious training; they had been lying about the courts and alleys of the Lower Road, or else crowding in the dirty and miserable hovels with which the neighbourhood abounds; for months many of the children came without shoes or stockings daily to the school, and young as they were, they presented all the characteristics of children accustomed to negligence and misery.

The Committee have been aided most effectually by several liberal donations of clothes, one from the congregation of the Rev. Mr. Gilbert, Barnsbury Chapel; two several sums amounting to £25. 18*s*., the produce of two Juvenile Bazaars, held by some ladies at Highbury, presented per the Rev. J. Lewis, of Union Chapel, Islington; also, by a grant of £10 per annum, from the Ragged School Union.

The statement of the Secretary was very cheering, and the Meeting seemed determined to help the Committee forward. There is an intention of enlarging the building, which at present is uncomfortably filled, and nothing but the straitened state of the funds prevents the Committee from carrying out enlarged schemes of usefulness.

The Meeting was addressed by the Rev. Messrs. Craig and Branch, Mr. Maberly, and by Mr. Anderson, of the Ragged School Union; the collection, comprising a donation of ten pounds from the Chairman, amounted to £15. 10*s*. 2*d*.